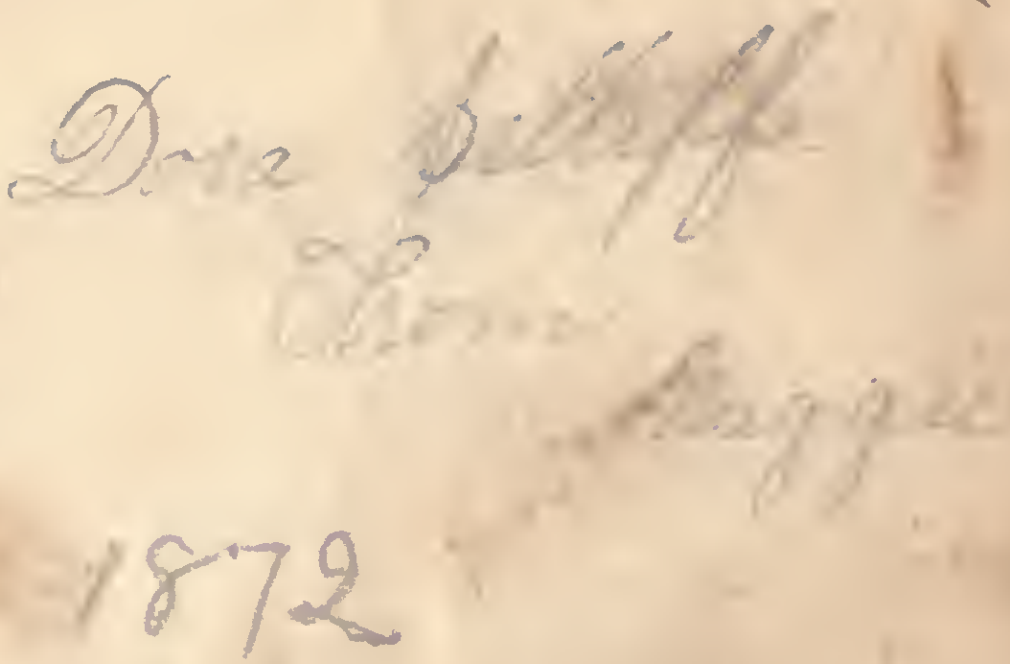
CHILDREN'S BOOK
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Maple Grove Stories

FOR

Little Readers.


CELTER

HAPPY HEARTS

BY JUNE ISLE.

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HAPPY HEARTS.

CHAPTER I.

WHOM HAVE WE ALWAYS.



R. and Mrs. Payson had three little children, who were very dear to them, and whom they amused and instructed in many pleasant ways.

One Spring, just as the leaves

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were bursting open and the birds were filling the air with gay songs, Mr. Payson told the children he had bought a home for them in the country.

This pleased the little ones, and they talked from morning till night about what they would do in their new home.

In the pretty country they watched the birds building their nests, and saw them feeding their young and teaching them to fly; and then they saw them in great cawing, twittering, fluttering swarms moving off to warmer lands when the yellow Autumn leaves began to fall.

But when the Winter winds sung through the old pine trees, the children began to talk about Christmas.

"I wonder if Santa Claus will come away out here, with his great pack of toys," said Rebecca one day. "I am afraid he will forget us, he has so many children to remember."

"He may perhaps forget us," said Joshua; "for cousin Nelly says that he, one time, forgot to put any thing in her stocking, although she hung it where he could find it."

"But," said Rebecca, "Nelly said it was a very stormy night,

and they lived on a hill, and the wind blew so hard they were afraid it would blow the house down. And I think Santa Claus was afraid the wind would upset his pack of toys if he went up on aunt Judd's roof."

"I think," said Joshua, "we had better send Santa Claus a letter, telling him that we have moved from town out into this pretty pine grove, then he will know where to find us."

"That will be a good way," said Rebecca; "for I remember when Mrs. White, who lives in our house in town, was here last week, she told mamma that many

persons had called there since we left, and asked for Mr. Payson. Now, if the people do not know that we have moved away, Santa Claus may not; so he may go there and slide down the chimney, and, without asking any thing about it, put all the nice things, which he has in his pack for us, in Tommy and Jenny White's stockings."

"I will write to Santa Claus," said Joshua, "as soon as I can find time."

Joshua said this in rather of a large way, for he wished to talk like a man of business.

"I will run and get your slate

now," said Rebecca; and she soon came with the slate and pencil.

They all sat down and Joshua took the pencil to write; but he found he could not do much, as his mamma was not there to spell the words for him.

"Let us ask papa to send word to Santa Claus," said Rebecca.

"And let us ask Mrs. White," said Newton, "to watch, and, when Santa Claus comes to her house, tell him where we live."

"But Mrs. White might watch all night, and then not see him," said Rebecca; "for I think Santa Claus never makes any noise

till he is just going out of sight; then his eight tiny reindeers jingle their bells as they scamper away with the sleigh full of toys."

Mrs. Payson came into the nursery, and the children told her what they had been saying.

"Santa Claus shall be told where to find you," said Mrs. Payson, "and you will have a happy Christmas if you are happy in your own hearts. You shall have a Christmas tree, and we will invite some friends to come and enjoy its fruits with us. But I wish you to remember, my darlings, if you have

naughty thoughts you can not have a happy Christmas."

"But if some naughty thoughts come, what can we do?" asked Rebecca.

"Try to think about something good and pleasant," said Mrs. Payson, "and ask God to help you. Yesterday, when I heard Joshua telling Newton, in an angry way, that he hoped Santa Claus would not bring him any thing, I thought my dear boy's thinker was wrong."

"I know, mamma," said Joshua, "that I wish to be good. But, if God lets me be naughty,

what good does it do to ask him to help me?"

"God will help you if you ask him in the right way, and if you watch yourselves," said Mrs. Payson. "If we wished to be happy ourselves we must do something to make others so; and even little children can do much good if they try."

"When we are trying to make others happy," said Joshua, "we shall have good thoughts."

"A little verse which you repeat," said Mrs. Payson, "says truly that

'Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.'

Now I wish to hear what you, my children, have to do before Christmas."

"We must get our gifts ready for the tree," said Rebecca.

"And we must learn our lessons every day," said Joshua.

"And I must learn all my letters, so papa will give me a rocking-horse," said little Newton.

"That is all right," said Mrs. Payson; "but have you not something more to do?"

"O, yes!" said Joshua, "we are to ride to town and invite our visitors to come and have a nice time with us in the holidays."

"But, are there not others whom you can help to be happy and good?" asked Mrs. Payson; "those whom we always have with us?"

"I do n't know," said Joshua, "as there are any persons that are always with us. Bridget has been here only a few months, and she says she must go away after New-Year; so you do not mean her. And John will leave next Spring; so you can not mean him."

"When you were learning your Sunday school lesson a few weeks since," said Mrs. Payson, "I heard you repeating these words

of Christ, 'Ye have the poor with you always; and whensoever ye will ye may do them good.'"

"O, yes, mamma, I did not think of that," said Joshua. "But, there are so many poor people, how can we do them good?"

"We can do our little," said Mrs. Payson, "and if we only make one sad heart glad we have done a good deed, and we shall be better and happier ourselves while we are helping others."

"When Mrs. Blake comes here to see you, mamma," said Rebecca, "she talks about poor people, and

how much she does for them. But Mrs. Blake does not seem to be happy; and she says there is no use in helping the poor, for if one begins there is no end."

"Mrs. Blake," said Mrs. Payson, "has not a pleasant way of talking; but I think she enjoys doing good to others in her own cross way. Yet, if we would be happy ourselves in making others happy, we must love to do it. If you should give little Harry Grant a pair of mittens because I told you to do so, while you were fretting because you wished to keep them yourself, you would be neither better nor happier for

doing it; and you would not speak gently and kindly to the poor little fellow, and so make his face and your own bright by pleasant words. Mrs. Blake spends much time and money in helping poor people; but she forgets that she should

'Speak gently, kindly to the poor.'"

"I have some toys, mamma," said Rebecca, "that I can give to Mrs. Grant's lame Harry; I am sure they will make his little pale face smile."

"And I should like to give Willie a pair of shoes," said Joshua; "for his are very ragged."

"Shall I give him my sled, mamma?" asked Newton.

Now Newton thought more of his sled than he did of any other plaything. It was painted green and yellow, and had a bright colored strap which he called the reins. The runners were very smooth, and he expected to have a gay time with it all Winter. So, when Newton asked about giving his sled, he knew he was giving what he liked best.

"No, my darling," said Mrs. Payson; "keep your sled. But, we will see what we all can do for Mrs. Grant and her children, by the time Christmas comes.

She is a good woman, and we can do much to make her happy while her husband is gone to the war.

"Then there is Mrs. Fisher, who lives near town; can we do something for her?" asked Mrs. Payson.

"Mr. Fisher gets drunk," said Joshua; "and Mrs. Blake says it does no good to try to help them, for he sells things that are given to his wife to buy whisky."

"But shall we leave poor Mrs. Fisher to suffer?" said Mrs. Payson. "Shall we try to do nothing for her and her dear children? They are often cold

for want of clothes and a fire. They are often hungry, because Mr. Fisher gets drunk, and is unkind to them.

"With so many good things around us, shall we not try to help the little hungry children who have an unkind father?"

"O, yes, mamma!" said all the children at once.

"May I give something to Martha Kelly," asked Rebecca, "who says she never has any presents?"

"Poor little Martha is not much older than you are, my daughter," said Mrs. Payson; "yet she is obliged to work

quite hard; for her mother is sick and her father is poor. But she has a sweet, smiling face, and she lives in a happier home than many children of rich parents."

"I know, mamma," said Joshua, "Martha always looks pleasant, even in a shabby dress."

"Mr. Kelly is a very kind and good man," said Mrs. Payson; "and I hope, before another Christmas, he will be able to give his family a better home.

"They look happy because they have good thoughts and try to do their duty. None can be happy, even in beautiful

homes, unless their thoughts are right.

"I hope you will select a pleasant book for little Martha, my daughter, and I will send some articles to her mamma."

"It is now your bedtime, my darlings. To-morrow we will begin to prepare our Christmas gifts for the poor."

The children kneeled down and thanked God for being so good to them, and asked him to help them to be kind and obedient, and to speak the truth.

After they had said their prayers, Newton ran to his mamma and kneeled down again

by her side, and said, "Will God please to help the hungry little children to smile, for Christ's sake?"



CHAPTER II.

FRITZ DEAD, YET LIVES.



THE next day, after the children had finished their lessons, Mrs. Payson said, "I will tell you a little story, showing how a child can do much good.

"Many years ago, I knew a little boy who could not walk. His nurse let him fall, when he

was a baby, and hurt his back, so that he grew out of shape, and could not stand on his feet.

"The little boy's name was Fritz Ritter. His parents lived in a pleasant home, and did all they could to make their darling lame boy happy.

"They taught him to read, and write, and to draw pictures.

"But Fritz said, 'That is not enough. I have dear friends, who do every thing for me. Now, I must do something too.'

"His father kept a man to draw him about in a little wagon; so Fritz knew all the streets in town, and visited the machine-

shops and mills to see how things are made. Almost every one looked kindly on his sweet, pale face, and wherever he went the people would talk with him and show him what he wished to see.

"As he rode about the city he saw many poor houses, and hungry and ragged children.

"One night, when his mamma laid him in his little bed, she saw that he was sad and quiet.

"'What is the matter with my little boy to-night?' she asked.

"'I have seen so many poor little children on Stone Alley to-day,' said Fritz, 'who were ragged and dirty, I wished they

had good homes and good mammas.'

"'I am sorry for all poor little children who are ragged and hungry,' said Mrs. Ritter. 'But, as we can not give them pleasant homes we must do what we can for them; for you know Christ says, "The poor ye have always; and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good."'"

"Fritz turned his face away and shut his eyes as though he was tired. But he was not tired; he was only thinking.

"He had stopped many times at a little shop, in the edge of town, where baskets were made;

a man, and a woman, and several children worked there, and they made many kinds of baskets; some of them very fine and pretty.

"Fritz had sat in the shop a long time that day, and he asked the man if he might come every day, and learn to make baskets.

"Now, in his little bed, with his eyes shut, he was thinking how he would make them and sell them for money to help poor children.

"The next morning Fritz told his mamma what he had been thinking about.

"She was pleased with his

plan; for she thought it would amuse her darling little lame boy.

"Fritz went to the basket-maker's shop all Summer, and by the time cold weather came he could make very beautiful baskets. Some merchants in town sold them for him, and by Christmas time he had laid up several dollars, which he said he should give to poor widow Wilcox, who looked sick and pale, and had two children.

"Mrs. Ritter gave Fritz a little room at home for his shop; and his papa put into it all the materials necessary for making

baskets; and there Fritz spent several hours every day at his work.

"He was happy and said, 'Now I am of some use, as I can help to make others good and happy.'

"Widow Wilcox and her children had food, and a fire, and clothes in the cold Winter weather; and it was the little pale-faced lame boy who gave them to her.

"Jim and Dora Wilcox learned their books because Fritz wished them to do so. They would not play any more with bad children on the streets, because Fritz told

them they must not. And when Jim promised that he would try to remember and not use any more naughty words, Fritz told him he would give him all the books he would read to Dora and his mother.

"Finally, Jim went every day to Fritz's little shop, and learned to make baskets. He was so handy that, by the time another Christmas came, he was able to carry to his mother money that he had himself earned.

"Fritz was about ten years old when he began to make baskets. The Lord allowed him to live only two years longer; but,

in that time, many poor children loved him, and thanked him for his kindness. When he died many tears were shed in the alleys and back streets, where the dear pale-faced boy had tried to make others good and happy.

"Little children went in a great company, when he was buried, and threw flowers into his grave.

"We believe that when Fritz's gentle spirit left his poor, crooked body, it went to the happy land, to grow in beauty forever. But he is not forgotten on earth; and now, many years after, there

are those who bless the dear little lame boy."

"Did you know him, mamma?" asked Rebecca, with tears in her eyes.

"Yes," said Mrs. Payson. "It was when I was a young girl that I attended the funeral of little Fritz.

"Mr. Wilcox, who keeps the great store of baskets in town, where you have sometimes stopped with me to see how beautiful they are, is the little Jim whom Fritz taught to be good and useful.

"He has always taken tender care of his mother, who is now

so old she remembers but little; but if you ask her about Fritz she will talk a long time about him, whom she calls 'God's dear child.'"

"Your true story, mamma, is better than made-up ones," said Joshua, as he walked away to the window.

"When I look at my little work-basket, mamma," said Rebecca, "that you bought of Mr. Wilcox, I shall think of Fritz, and the basket will help me to be good."

"So you see, my darling," said Mrs. Payson, "when our bodies are turning to dust in

the ground, the deeds which we did may be helping others to be good or bad."



CHAPTER III.

HOW? ANSWERED.



WHEN the family were gathered in the parlor, after dinner, Mrs. Payson said, "We will now see how we can help poor Mrs. Fisher; for there are none who more need kind words and deeds than helpless ones whom a bad husband and father leaves

to suffer, and sometimes to perish, with hunger and cold."

"But how can we give Mrs. Fisher any thing, if her husband sells it?" asked Joshua.

"There is an honest woman living next to Mrs. Fisher's," said Mrs. Payson, "who has washed for me sometimes. I will hire a place in her little yard for coal, and send some there. I will give Mrs. Fisher tickets for getting a half bushel at a time, when she needs it, so she can have a fire."

"And I will give her tickets for getting bread at the bakery, and meat and potatoes in market," said Mr. Payson. "She

must get a little at a time, and not keep any in the house for her husband to carry off."

"That will be good," said Rebecca; "the little hungry children will smile."

"I will give half of my money to buy some shoes for Dick Fisher," said Joshua.

"And I will give half of mine to buy a flannel petticoat for Mrs. Fisher," said Rebecca.

"Here is my money, mamma," said Newton, who had run to bring his little box.

"May we send the children some of our toys?" asked Rebecca.

"You may send what you

please," said Mrs. Payson. "We will put them in a basket with enough food for a good dinner, and you may carry all to her, Christmas morning, with the tickets."

"O, mamma," said Joshua, "it will be pleasant to see how surprised and happy they will look."

"Now, what shall we do for Mrs. Grant?" asked Mrs. Payson.

"Several neighbors have promised to join me in giving her coal, flour, and meat, as long as she needs such help," said Mr. Payson.

"I will prepare some clothes for herself and her children," said Mrs. Payson.

"And we will give them some toys and books," said Joshua.

"Will you please, papa," said Newton, "send word to Santa Claus to carry his pack to the top of Mrs. Grant's chimney? And I will tell little lame Harry to hang up his stocking."

"Yes," said Mr. Payson smiling, "I will send word to Santa Claus to have his eight tiny reindeer jingle their bells right merrily over Mrs. Grant's chimney."

That night Mr. Payson's three

children went to bed feeling very happy; for they were trying to do something to make others good and happy.



CHAPTER IV.

WHAT THE STARS SAW.



THE stars were yet winking through the pine trees on Christmas morning, when the little Paysons went shouting their "merry Christmas" through the house.

Santa Claus had filled their stockings with just what they

most wanted. Strange that he should know so well!

There could be no more morning naps now, and while the stars were shutting their eyes Bridget prepared the early breakfast, so the children might go with their happy hearts and their gifts to gladden those who needed kind words and good deeds.

After the family had joined in their morning worship, Mr. Payson said, "Now, my children, we will go and see some sad faces .smile, while mamma prepares the Christmas-tree; for she says we must not have a peep

at it till our friends come this evening."

By the time the sun was looking over the tree tops, Mr. Payson and the children were riding toward Mrs. Grant's with a basket of good things and a great many kind words.

They found the little Grants in quite an uproar. They had hung up their stockings for the first time in their lives, and now they were spreading out Santa Claus's wonderful gifts with great glee.

The basket was carried in, and Mr. Payson told Mrs. Grant

what more would be done for her every-day comfort.

Tears came in her eyes when she thanked him and the children.

"It almost made me feel like crying," said Rebecca, when they had left the house, "to see poor lame Harry's face look so happy."

At Mrs. Fisher's they found a gloomy and unhappy scene.

Mr. Fisher sat with his hair falling over his half-shut eyes, while the hungry and cold children were huddled around the half-warmed stove on which their mother was trying to cook something for breakfast.

"My children have come to bring some smiles to yourself and your little ones this Christmas morning," said Mr. Payson to Mrs. Fisher, as they stepped into the miserable home.

"Mamma says, will you please have a good dinner?" said Rebecca, as she and Joshua carried the basket to Mrs. Fisher, whose eyes filled with tears at this unexpected kindness.

Mr. Payson gave her the tickets for coal and food, and told her that his wife would call sometimes and see how she enjoyed them.

Mr. Fisher hung his head in

shame as the bright faces of the little Paysons left. But a ray of light had shone into that gloomy home, and Mrs. Fisher's sad face smiled when she saw her children spreading out their Christmas gifts. Each one had been kindly remembered and was bright with happiness.

Joshua, and Rebecca, and Newton rode toward home, carrying hearts filled anew with love, and gentleness, and kindness.

Mr. Payson next knocked at Mr. Kelly's door. Mrs. Kelly was sitting, wrapped up, in a rocking chair, sick, but having a pleasant smile. Little Martha

was doing the morning work, and looked with surprise at the early visitors and their good gifts.

The children soon had the food spread out for Mrs. Kelly to see what a nice dinner she would have; and Martha fairly danced around the room, holding up a good Sunday frock for herself and a pretty story book.

"This *is* a happy Christmas," said Rebecca as they rode home.

"We learn, my children," said Mr. Payson, "that those who try to do their duty may be rich in happy hearts and smiling

homes though they are very poor.

"But bad hearts and bad ways make the sunshine seem gloomy in the finest parlors."

When the sun went down that night, friends, both old and young, gathered in Mr. Payson's parlors, to pluck gifts from the well-loaded Christmas-tree.

Fruits from all parts of the world were hanging in its branches, and toys and books peeped out from the green leaves.

When little eyelids were closed in sleep that night, the stars winked and smiled over

little hearts that were brimful of love; because, by giving, they had grown rich.

